

The huge human and environmental catastrophe has brought to light glaring deficiencies in the way we oversee, regulate, and hold accountable those who produce oil and gas on our public lands.

This bill will accomplish several good things such as imposing safety standards on drilling and strengthening the Land and Water Conservation Fund thanks to Chairman Rahall. It is important that it will also clarify and improve liability laws thanks to Mr. Oberstar.

Under the current law, BP is responsible for the removal costs of the spill. They are liable only for \$75 million, however, for economic and natural resource damages. For a spill of this magnitude, a limit as low as \$75 million is laughable.

After the spill began, I led 85 of my colleagues in introducing the Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act, which would raise the liability cap now and retroactively. Of course the polluters should pay. The escrow account created by the administration and BP will have a short-term fix, but the CLEAR Act will ensure that BP is legally liable for all economic and natural resource damages it has caused. The public will know the buck stops with the oil companies, that the costs will not spill over to taxpayers.

I urge my colleagues to support this.